

# PEOPLE & THINGS By ATTICUS

THE first English translations of writings by Albert Camus, who has just been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, appeared anonymously. They were articles in the underground resistance paper "Combat" and they were published in London from Fighting French Headquarters while Camus, in Paris, was stimulating the moral and intellectual will to resist.

I met Camus in 1944, immediately after the liberation of Paris, in the flat of a mutual friend high above the rue de Rivoli. Only then did I discover that he was the writer of the "Combat" articles I had admired.

His questions, like those of many other Frenchmen at that time, sounded strange to me; it was as if the odd Englishman beginning to appear in Paris seemed to him to have come from a place incredibly remote in space and time. The most trivial details of life in England fascinated him, but he found it difficult to believe how great was the inspiration which French resistance writers had given to men of the free world.

Yet he felt no hatred towards the Germans, as his "Lettres à un ami allemand" show.

## No Existentialist

SOON after Paris was freed "Combat" appeared as a daily paper and its leaders, written by Camus, became one of the most remarkable features of post-occupation journalism in France.

His uncompromising sense of justice made him one of the few resistance figures with courage to claim fair treatment for collaborators when the pent-up hatred of the occupation period was released.

At this time, too, he was labelled an existentialist, a label he has always disclaimed.

## Royal Dressmaker

"HEAVENS," said Mr. Norman Hartnell, when I visited him to discuss the dresses he had designed for the Royal tour, "I had always imagined Atticus as a fat old fellow with a Bernard Shaw beard"; and he went on to define the two



Mr. Norman Hartnell, fishing at his Windsor home.

qualifications needed by a Royal dressmaker as "tact and absolutely no temperament."

Certainly at three in the afternoon, bouncing, tweed-suited, red-carnationed and just risen from his afternoon nap, he is the living embodiment of the virtues he professes.

No one could be calmer about the Royal dresses. Some of the fittings with the Queen proved difficult to arrange and, between them, he and Mr. Hardy Amies have had only from the end of last June to design and make all her dresses.

"But I've been doing this job for twenty years, and if I'm going to start getting rattled at my time of life, I ought to try my hand at something else."

He describes his job as "diplomacy quite as much as dressmaking—you can almost create an international incident with the wrong colour"—and says that the worst enemies the Royal dresses have to face are the bouquets. "Either they come wet from the florist and spoil the front of the skirt, or else some of the wire gets caught up in the embroideries."

## White Magic

I MET Sir Miles Thomas at the Motor Show, looking as genial and dynamic as ever.

He thought this story might appeal to my readers.

A Ghana businessman arrived home after his first trip to England. Asked what he thought about us, he said: "Oh, they're a wonderful people. They have far more powerful witch doctors than we do. In South London I saw thousands of people sitting round an oval piece of grass. Some men dressed in white came out and stuck two little rows of sticks in the ground."

"Then one of the men in white rubbed a red ball on his trousers—and down came the rain!"

## A Fortune in Cars

ONE of the most original ways of becoming a millionaire has been discovered by Mr. Robert Petersen, a thirty-one-year-old publisher from Los Angeles who is visiting Britain this week-end.

In 1948, as a publicity man who had just lost his job with a film studio, he borrowed 400 dollars to start "Hot Rod," a magazine for the young American who enjoys messing around with motor-cars.

Since then he has built up a circulation of 14 million on the do-it-yourself of American car ownership, and has helped to change the home-supercharged second-hand car from a symptom of juvenile delinquency into a national pastime conducted on the highest technological level.

For Petersen, a genial Californian with something of the looks of a young Orson Welles, all this has meant a house on Sunset Boulevard, a stable of nine of the fastest cars in America, and the chance to sponsor a "hot rod" as an entry in last year's *Mille Miglia*. His latest interest is a magazine for the American ten-year-olds who are just getting their own midge racing cars.

## Tallest Grenadiers

AT midday yesterday on their return from Germany, the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards, exercised their ancient privilege of marching through the City with bayonets fixed, drums beating and colours flying.

At the City limits they were given the traditional challenge by the City Marshal, Brigadier R. F. S. Gooch, who is a Coldstreamer.

The battalion was led by the Queen's Company, which has always been composed of the tallest men in the regiment. I am told that with the average height at 6 feet 4 inches, this year's Queen's Company is the tallest ever.

## Record of Service

WHEN, as Lord Privy Seal, Lord Inman became a member of the Cabinet in 1947, the one outside position he insisted on retaining was the Chairmanship of the Charing Cross Hospital.

As a result, his connection

with the hospital remains unbroken from the day in 1921 when, at the age of 29, he was appointed House Governor out of an application list of 583. Last Tuesday at the Royal College of Surgeons the hospital presented him with his portrait, painted by Mr. Norman Hepple to mark his 37th year in its service.

Born in Knaresborough and starting work as a newspaper boy, among many other distinguished positions he has held that of a Church Commissioner and of chairman of the B.B.C. But the Charing Cross Hospital remains the most important thread running through his career. In his time he has collected nearly £2 million for the hospital. His one remaining ambition is to see it rebuilt under his chairmanship and running as the most up-to-date medical centre in the country.

## Quintessential Oxford

ONE of the most popular of the recent Professorial appointments at Oxford must surely be that of Nevill Coghill to the Merton Professorship of English Literature. In the thirty-odd years that he has been a Fellow of Exeter, his tall, gangling figure topped by the great leonine head has often been likened by his pupils to that of some kindly Beowulf, loping through the quadrangles with his trousers rising towards half-mast ("Mr. Coghill in Exeter Garden," as an undergraduate writes, "in the 'Isis' has pictured him, 'rubbing the toe of one suede shoe against the other to give them that casual look.'")

His fight for the preservation of the Oxford Playhouse, his championship of the undergraduate drama, his sumptuous productions for the O.U.D.S., his radio presentations of "Troilus and Cressida" and "The Canterbury Tales," and his inimitable readings in Chaucer's own English are some of the achievements which have endeared him to Oxford.

He is a man of imaginative academic perception. A tutorial with Coghill might stand as the quintessence of the sort of education only Oxford at its best can offer.

## By Their Fruit—

A BOURNEMOUTH newspaper recently reported the discovery in a local garden of a strange plant which had fruit covered with thorns. It suggested, facetiously, that the seed had been dropped by a flying saucer.

An Italian newspaper saw the story and took it seriously. A Russian bachelor of architecture, Mr. Roman E. Chertoff, after reading the Italian story, next wrote from Moscow to the Mayor of Bournemouth:

"I shall be profoundly grateful to you, dear sir, if you send me any information on the case. Our Soviet Press has made no reference to it, but this may be explained by the necessity of profound investigation of such an unusual case."

The Mayor's reply told Mr. Chertoff that the plant, though uncommon, is not unknown in England. It is a thorn apple.

## People and Words

Americans are the most stupidly complacent people that I have ever known.

—Mrs. ELEANOR ROOSEVELT.

Profits are not a measure of a man's morality, but of his profligacy.

—Mr. EUGENE BLACK, President of the International Bank.

In the waxworks business a politician—even a Prime Minister—isn't nearly as good a draw as a murderer who has been hanged.

—Mr. FRANCOIS TUSSAULT.

How can there be a colour bar among musicians? We all play the same black and white notes.

—Mr. JAMES HANCOCK.